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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8797
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
DISMISSION GENEVA

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

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Declassify: () In Part () In Full

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INCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 06834

DEPT FOR ARA/SC AND HA/HR

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN ARGENTINA

REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 6717, (B) BUENOS AIRES 6756,
(C) BUENOS AIRES 6825

1. INTRANSIGENT PARTY CANDIDATE MISSING. ACCORDING TO
PRESS REPORTS, INTRANSIGENT PARTY CANDIDATE FOR PROVINCIAL
DEPUTY IN SALTA PROVINCE, RUBEN ALBERTO ALVAREZ, WAS LAST
SEEN ON SEPTEMBER 17 WHEN HE BOARDED A BUS BOUND FOR THE
CITY OF RESISTENCIA, IN CHACO PROVINCE. THE PARTY'S
LEGAL ADVISOR REPORTED THE DISAPPEARANCE TO THE SALTA
COURTS AND ASKED IF ALVAREZ HAD BEEN DETAINED BY THE
POLICE. ON SEPTEMBER 27 ABOUT 1,000 PEOPLE, INCLUDING
INTRANSIGENT PARTY LEADERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS,
DEMONSTRATED OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT HOUSE IN BUENOS AIRES TO
DEMAND THE REAPPEARANCE OF ALVAREZ. A GROUP OF PARTY
REPRESENTATIVES GAVE A PETITION TO THE GOVERNMENT, DEMAN-
DING THE "IMMEDIATE RELEASE" OF ALVAREZ. THE PETITION
WAS SIGNED BY LEADERS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES,
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INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ITALO LUDER, RAUL ALFONSIN, AND OSCAR ALENDE; HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS AUGUSTO CONTE AND ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL; AND UNION LEADERS LORENZO MIGUEL, SAUL UBALDINI, AND VICENTE SAADI.

2. THREE CORPSES IDENTIFIED OUT OF THIRTY. THIRTY UNIDENTIFIED CORPSES WERE DUG UP IN DERQUI (ABOUT 45 MILES NORTHWEST OF BUENOS AIRES) ON SEPTEMBER 27 UNDER THE ORDERS OF A JUDGE WHO IS INVESTIGATING THE CASES. OF THE THIRTY, THREE WERE IDENTIFIED AS CONRADO OSCAR ALZOGARAY, ALBERTO E. COMAS, AND ANGEL OSVALDO LEIVA. THE CORPSES WERE APPARENTLY DESTROYED BY EXPLOSIVES HOURS AFTER A SHOOTOUT ON AUGUST 20, 1976. PEOPLE LIVING IN THE AREA TOLD THE PRESS THAT AT DAWN ON THAT DATE THEY HEARD GUNSHOTS AND A HUGE EXPLOSION. WITNESSES SAID THAT THE BODIES WERE UNRECOGNIZABLE BUT THAT THEY SEEMED TO BE THOSE OF YOUNGSTERS WITH THEIR HANDS TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS.

3. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY HAS NO FILES ON THE THREE PEOPLE WHO WERE IDENTIFIED; ONLY A CARD INDICATING THAT ALZOGARAY HAD DISAPPEARED. END COMMENT.

4. NINE MISSING CHILDREN FOUND. PRESS REPORTS STATE THAT A GROUP OF GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO TRAVELED TO GENEVA TO TELL THE UNITED NATIONS THAT THEY HAVE FOUND NINE CHILDREN WHO HAD BEEN MISSING, THAT TWO OF THE CHILDREN WERE "IN DEPLORABLE CONDITION," AND THAT THE UN SHOULD TAKE "CONCRETE AND PUBLIC ACTION" TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE "SERIOUS PROBLEM OF MISSING CHILDREN IN ARGENTINA, WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SOLVED." THE GRANDMOTHERS SUBMITTED THEIR STATEMENT TO THE HEAD OF THE UN GROUP CONCERNED WITH FORCED AND VOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES, ACCORDING TO A STATEMENT RELEASED IN BUENOS AIRES.
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5. VERPLAETSEN RESIGNS. PRESS REPORTS OF SEPTEMBER 28 STATE THAT THE ARMY'S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND JUNTA MEMBER, LTG CRISTINO NICOLAIDES, OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED THE DAY BEFORE THAT THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE POLICE CHIEF, GENERAL FERNANDO VERPLAETSEN, HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO SECOND IN COMMAND OF MILITARY INSTITUTES. A MILITARY SOURCE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT VERPLAETSEN'S REPLACEMENT WOULD BE "A RETIRED GENERAL."

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6. COMMENT: VERPLAETSEN IS BEING TRANSFERRED AFTER ALLEGEDLY TELLING SUBORDINATES THAT BUENOS AIRES GOVERNOR JORGE AGUADO HAD ORDERED POLICE FORCES TO DISPERSE RESIDENTS OF THE BELGRANO DISTRICT (WHO HAD TAKEN OVER THE CITY HALL IN A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE SALE OF LOCAL WOODLAND) "WITH BLOOD AND FIRE." AGUADO DENIED HAVING USED THOSE WORDS, BUT ADMITTED THAT HE GAVE THE ORDER TO DISPERSE THE DEMONSTRATORS, WHICH WAS DONE WITHOUT ANY REPORTED INJURIES. PRESS REPORTS ALSO STATED THAT VERPLAETSEN HAD DENIED RECEIVING A PERONIST OFFER TO BECOME ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AFTER A JUSTICIALIST VICTORY IN THE OCTOBER 30 ELECTIONS.

7. RELEASE OF URUGUAYAN GENERAL DEMANDED. ABOUT 100 ARGENTINE POLITICIANS AND PERSONALITIES, HEADED BY RADICAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RAUL ALFONSIN AND INTRANSIGENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OSCAR ALENDE, DEMANDED ON SEPTEMBER 23 THAT URUGUAYAN GENERAL LIBER SEREGNI BE RELEASED. SEREGNI HAS BEEN IN JAIL IN URUGUAY FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS. HE REPORTEDLY WAS THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE "FRENTE AMPLIO" LEFTIST ORGANIZATION IN 1971, AND WAS ARRESTED IN 1973 BECAUSE OF HIS OPPOSITION TO THE

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SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN ARGENTINA

COUP ORGANIZED BY PRESIDENT JUAN MARIA BORDABERRY.
SEREGNI WAS REPORTEDLY TRIED BY A MILITARY COURT, STRIPPED
OF HIS RANK, AND IMPRISONED ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE
GOVERNMENT'S SECURITY REGULATIONS. THE GROUP OF ARGENTINE
DEMONSTRATORS PRESENTED A FORMAL REQUEST FOR HIS RELEASE
TO THE URUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR IN ARGENTINA AND ASKED THAT IT
BE FORWARDED TO URUGUAYAN PRESIDENT GREGORIO ALVAREZ.
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